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*Nicaragua: Opposition leader Aguero and his followers released all of their hostages, including US citizens, and peacefully ended their struggle in Managua last night.

The opposition group, after reaching an agreement with the government, evacuated the hotel in which they had been besieged. The government agreed to provide safe conduct for the rebels and to proceed with the elections scheduled for 5 February.

Tension in downtown Managua relaxed considerably, and both government and opposition leaders appeared anxious to bring the ugly episode to an end.

It is still not clear what effect the recent events will have on the elections. The government's candidate, General Somoza, was favored to win before the outbreak and will probably insist on keeping to the election timetable. Aguero, on the other hand, may withdraw from the running, charging that the balloting would be rigged, as he has done on two previous occasions.

If Aguero does not run, Somoza will still have nominal opposition from Abaunza, leader of a small dissident conservative party. Abaunza's party provided the government machine with its only legal opposition in the 1963 elections.

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EEC: The recent De Gaulle - Kiesinger talks in Paris may have paved the way for a long-discussed reorganization of European community executive bodies.

According to German officials, agreement was reached on a way to avoid some of the difficulties that have held up the plan to unite the EEC and EURATOM commissions and the Coal-Steel High Authority into one body. One of the main difficulties hitherto has been France's opposition to appointing EEC commission president Hallstein to the new executive body, because Paris has believed he is committed to an unacceptable "supranational" philosophy of European integration. The French now are said to be willing to accept Hallstein, provided his tenure is short. France apparently also has dropped its insistence on automatic rotation in the presidency and vice-presidency.

Bonn now will seek Hallstein's agreement to resign the new post at some not too distant date, and if he concurs, the agreement of the other EEC members will be sought. Last year, Italy, Belgium, and Luxembourg indicated that they might go along with a "resignation" approach. The Dutch, however, were strongly opposed, and Hallstein himself may be difficult to persuade.

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Dominican Republic: Numerous arrests made by the Balaguer government to foil an alleged conspiracy against the regime seem sure to draw strong opposition criticism.

Those arrested include leaders of the left-of-center Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) as well as Communists and right-wing extremists. Those detained are being interrogated and apparently will be quickly released.

Balaguer authorized the arrests on the basis of vague reports of joint antigovernment plotting by leftists and rightists. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the alleged plotting does not appear to have gone beyond the talking stage.

The indiscriminate nature of the arrests seems sure to provoke intensified opposition attacks on Balaguer for his arbitrary action and the adoption of "neo-Trujillo" policies. PRD leader Antonio Guzman has termed the round-up a "stupidity" and warned that a sharp response from his party could be expected.

[REDACTED]

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NOTES

Finland-USSR: Soviet pressures on Prime Minister Paasio and his governing Social Democratic Party (SDP) appear to have subsided. Some of the Soviet dissatisfaction with Paasio probably resulted from efforts by the SDP's left-wing elements to discredit him. The US Embassy in Helsinki notes, however, that Paasio continues to enjoy the solid support of the SDP rank and file. The anticipated announcement of SDP support for President Kekkonen's reelection in 1968 should be helpful in reassuring Moscow that the party backs Kekkonen's policy of cooperation. [REDACTED]

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USSR-Italy: President Podgorny's official trip is part of Moscow's effort to promote a "normalization" of relations with countries of Western Europe. The eight-day visit, which starts today, will underscore the continuing growth of Soviet-Italian economic exchanges and may conclude with the signing of a consular convention. No political surprises are likely to come from Podgorny's talk with Premier Saragat tomorrow, or his audience with the Pope on Sunday. [REDACTED]

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Chile: President Frei's visit to the US scheduled for next week has been canceled, according to the Chilean Foreign Minister. If Frei subsequently obtains the permission of the Chilean congress, he may possibly reschedule his visit for a later date. By not defying the senate at this time, Frei may be able to exploit the political issue, particularly in the upcoming municipal election. [REDACTED]

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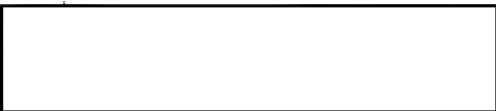
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